

Common polypody

Polypodium vulgare

Family Polypodiaceae



Identification

- Small, evergreen fern.
- The leathery leaves (fronds) have triangular leaflets.
- The leaflets grow opposite each other along the rachis (midrib of frond).
- Spores are produced in large, round dot-like clusters (sori) on the underside of the leaflet.
- The rhizomes (underground stem) grows horizontally.



Common polypody. Photo: C. Jensen.



Underside of common polypody leaf showing sori. Photo: C. Jensen.

Where is it found?

Common polypody is known to be established in the wild on the Christchurch Port Hills, from Godley Head to Gebbies Pass. It is also known to be present on Otamahua/Quail Island and is of noted concern in the Wellington area.

There are no native species of the genus *Polypodium* in New Zealand but common polypody belongs to the same family as one of our common native ferns, hound's tongue (*Microsorium pustulatum* subsp. *pustulatum*).

Why is it a problem?

Common polypody is an aggressive spreading fern. It spreads easily via a network of spreading, mat-like rhizomes and spores. It has a wide habitat ranging from open sunny outcrops to the shaded understory of a forest. Canterbury's rock outcrops are sensitive areas and, in these situations, common polypody can compete with threatened native vegetation.

Status

Common polypody has no legal status however, it has been acknowledged as being a weed in some situations.

Control

At present, common polypody is difficult to control as there is no known successful control method available. Individual plants can be dug out, but ensure all the rhizomes are removed and disposed off appropriately.



Hound's tongue (left fern) and common polypody (right fern). Photo: D. Carter (CCC).